

## HOMEFINDER

FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER

# An affordable option in College Park



Melinda Sanner's home, where she lives with fiancé Christopher Griffin, was built in 1949. CHRISTOPHER MICHAEL OQUENDO  
PHOTOS / WWW.OPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

**By Lori Johnston**  
For the AJC

After Melinda Sanner graduated from the University of Alabama in 2011, she moved back to her parents' home in Morrow to save money for a home. Sanner, who works for Koch Business Solutions in downtown Atlanta, found a house with a yard for her dog, Isabelle, in an unexpected location.

Sanner, 25, chatted about the College Park foreclosure she bought, and how she and her fiancé, Christopher Griffin, have taken on DIY projects.

**Q:** How did you decide to look in College Park?

**A:** My dad actually grew up in College Park and he wanted me to check it out. I looked at Midtown and a few other areas. I wound up coming to College Park. The prices were amazing. I could actually afford a house here. Though it would be great to be in Midtown, it's worked out perfectly here. It's only about a 15- to 20-minute drive in. My fiancé works in Newnan. It's only a 20- to 25-minute drive for him.

**Q:** What was your budget?

**A:** I was approved for \$160,000 initially. But I really wanted to stay even below that just to make sure I wasn't maxing myself out. I ended up finding this house for \$140,000.

**Q:** Did you look at a lot of homes in College Park?

**A:** The house I'm in now is actually the first one.

It's an older house, but it's got a lot of character. It's got hardwoods throughout. It's got a lot of the old vents and things that really show its age.

**Q:** As a foreclosure, what was the home's condition?

**A:** The water wasn't on when I viewed the house. The electricity wasn't on. I really wasn't sure what shape the different systems were in. I got my own electrician, my own plumber. (The bank) did fix the air conditioner.

**Q:** Now that you have moved in, what's a feature you love?

**A:** It came with a fenced-in backyard. I have started a garden. It's something I didn't think I wanted, but now I love it.

[editorial]



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**Q:** What changes have you made?

**A:** The kitchen actually has the washer and dryer hookup. We wound up turning the pantry into a little laundry room. We painted and hung a chandelier. We got front load washer and dryer off Craigslist for \$350. It was something that was kind of an eyesore in the beginning, but we've made it work. We redid the back deck. We were able to use a lot of the boards that were there and just replace three or four. We painted it and reinforced some of the wood. We made a couple of benches.

**Q:** What did you learn about homebuying?

**A:** I learned that it is a lengthy process. I had to go dig around and find tax returns and employment letters. Once I found a house and the

process kicked up, it took a good two weeks before the bank would say, "Now you're really approved and you can buy a house."

**Q:** What's it like to have purchased in College Park?

**A:** It's weird how it worked out. I have purchased a house where (my dad) grew up and he's got good memories here. When I moved here, I didn't think there would be other young people. I'll see people jogging and walking their dogs. It's definitely been a blessing.

### AT A GLANCE

Melinda Sanner's home, built in 1949, has three bedrooms, two baths and about 1,275 square feet. She purchased it in May, assisted by Joseph Starr and Jacob Dearolph with DeLoach Realty.



The couple's home has a fenced-in yard for their dog, Isabelle.

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